



This State Plan was developed to provide the citizens of New Jersey with notice as to how the State will comply with the requirements of HAVA and how it intends to use all of the federal funds that will be provided to the State. We have attempted to provide this information in a straightforward manner and to provide as much detail as we reasonably could. It has also been our intent to provide reasonable expectations as to what the State will be able to do to improve its election process.

As was stated in the Introduction, change will not occur overnight. We are confident that what has been proposed in the Plan, however, can be accomplished with the continued, selfless commitment of our State's election officials at all levels and the willingness of all interested constituencies, from public interest groups to elected officials and the public at large, to work together to achieve these goals. No Plan can be realized without such joint effort.

The SPC's deliberations have been a learning process for all directly involved. Each member offered their unique insight and perspective into the election process and how it can be improved. For example, the county election officials were an invaluable resource regarding the intricacies of election administration and the members of public interest groups offered insight regarding individual voter concerns and the dynamics of voter registration drives. Such discussions imparted a deeper appreciation for the need to balance the fundamental interest of expanding the voting process while safeguarding its integrity. I wish to extend, on behalf of the Department, my deepest appreciation to each member of the SPC for his or her time, commitment and expertise.

I am also appreciative of the members of the public who attended the public hearings, whether they publicly commented or simply came to listen. Because of the varied perspectives of the members of the SPC and their attention to detail during their deliberations, a number of issues raised by members of the public, particularly those pertaining to voters with disabilities, were already addressed in the Preliminary Plan. The comments from members of the public also were a reaffirmation of the SPC's stance that the electoral process in New Jersey can be improved by way of a strong uniform commitment to voter education to all segments of the public. HAVA has presented us with the unprecedented opportunity to entertain creative and unique ways to encourage our citizenry's fuller and better informed participation in our democratic form of government.

Public input also underscored the value of providing a forum for our citizens to address matters of concern to us all. While the formal HAVA public comment period may be over, the opportunity for public comment to this Department is not. I invite anyone to reach out through the Department's website or by letter if they wish to offer further thoughts and comments as it relates to elections in New Jersey. Although we cannot promise that all of your ideas can be realized, they will be given due consideration and they may lead to further study. For example, while the SPC was specifically charged under HAVA to address the thirteen points that are in the Plan, we also had the opportunity to raise additional concepts for future consideration such as Internet-based voter registration systems, voter-verified paper trails for voting systems and same-day voter registration.

remarks

It is fair to say that the implementation of HAVA will be a work in progress. We need to remain committed to the goals of this new federal law in terms of upgrading the infrastructure of elections and safeguarding the votes of all qualified citizens. We will need to be responsive to making necessary adjustments and modifications as we strive toward achieving these goals. The continued interest of the citizens of New Jersey will be an invaluable component in this effort.



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